

NEWS RELEASE

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WEST NILE VIRUS DEAD BIRD REPORTING

The Niagara County Department of Health has initiated West Nile Virus (WNV) activities in the County as of 5/12/08. The Environmental Health Division is currently conducting larvae surveys in those areas where WNV has been identified previously. Larvacide application operations will commence after completion of the surveys, based upon documented need. The Department will be working with our municipalities again this year to address local drainage issues that contribute to mosquito breeding areas. We will also be working with our municipalities to provide WNV educational materials to the community. The Department appreciates the help we receive from our local municipalities.

Dead bird reporting will again be critical to our disease control operations, and the community is encouraged to report all dead birds. The **Niagara County Department of Health Dead Bird Hotline** will accept reports of **dead crows and bluejays only**, at **439-7583**, 7 days per week, 24 hours per day. After 4pm and before 8am, voicemail will activate to record your call information for evaluation by public health officials. Report all **other** dead birds to the **New York State Hotline** at **1-866-537-2473**, 8am to 4:30pm. Contact the regional NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Buffalo office at 716-851-7010 or Allegheny office at 716-372-0645 if you see a large number of dead waterfowl in the same place. They will decide if additional testing needs to be accomplished as their contribution to our efforts.

When calling the Niagara County Hotline (439-7583) to report a dead crow or bluejay, please provide the following information:

- Type of bird – crow or bluejay
- Date and time found, and time of death, if known
- Location of dead bird(s)
- Callers name, address and phone number

Niagara County cannot accept severely traumatized or decomposed birds for submission. Birds in poor condition are not suitable for testing.

If a representative does not contact you within two hours of making the report to Niagara County Department of Health, dispose of the dead bird. Use gloves and place the dead bird in a plastic bag. Secure the end of the bag and discard in a trash receptacle with tight-fitting lid, to keep out animal scavengers. Wash your hands thoroughly with running water and soap.

The New York State Department of Health Public Health Laboratory at Wadsworth in Albany will conduct testing and analysis for WNV on a selected basis. For various reasons, some dead birds may not be considered for testing. Once Wadsworth confirms the presence of WNV infection in Niagara County birds, the State and County Departments of Health will decide if further bird reports warrant submission and testing. Whether tested or not, Niagara County will record all dead bird reports and location data.

The cooperation of the community in reporting dead birds is vital to our program. The presence of dead bird clusters could indicate renewed WNV activity in our county. Monitoring this activity will allow timely responses to problem areas. The Niagara County Department of Health appreciates your calls and the information received.

West Nile Virus information is currently being assembled and will be distributed throughout the community during the next two weeks. Local municipal offices will have this information available for the public. The public may also call us at 439-7444 for written material on west nile virus.

For additional information on West Nile Virus, visit the web at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile> and at <http://www.health.state.ny.us>.